WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for playing a video summary, comprising:

a signal receiving unit configured to receive a signal including video data;

a video data memory configured to sequentially store the video data;

a timing decision unit configured to generate a video summary generation request by referring to the signal;

a summary method indication unit configured to indicate a generation method of the video summary;

a video summary generation unit configured to generate the video summary from the video data by using the generation method in response to the video summary generation request; and

a video summary play unit configured to play the video summary.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein,
    the signal includes meta data, and
    said timing decision unit decides a timing when a video summary is generated by referring to the meta data.

3. The apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:

a meta data memory configured to sequentially store the meta data.

4. The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein,

the video data includes each frame in time series, and

the meta data includes a time and an event name, the time corresponding to one frame of the video data, and the event name representing contents of the one frame of the video data.

5. The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein,

said timing decision unit includes a decision table configured to previously store a plurality of event names, and said timing decision unit decides whether the event name of the meta data coincides with one of the plurality of event names in the decision table.

6. The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein,

if the event name of the meta data coincides with one of the plurality of event names in the decision table,

said timing decision unit generates the video

summary generation request.

7. The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein,
while said video summary play unit plays a
video summary,
said video summary generation unit selects a
next event for a play position of frames of which
the video summary was generated, from said meta data
memory in response to the video summary generation
request.

8. The apparatus according to claim 7, wherein,
said video summary generation unit includes an
event level definition table configured to
previously store a level of each event, and said
video summary generation unit determines a level of
the next event by referring to the event level
definition table.

9. The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein,
said summary method indication unit indicates a
threshold level of an important event to generate a
video summary, and
said video summary generation unit compares the
level of the next event with the threshold level.

10. The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein,

if the level of the next event is above or equal to the threshold level,

said video summary generation unit extracts a time corresponding to the next event from said meta data memory, and generates period data of a video summary in which the time is a center timing.

11. The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein,

said video summary play unit extracts frames corresponding to the period data from said video data memory, and plays the frames as the video summary.

12. The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein,

if the level of the next event is below the threshold level or after the period data of the video summary is generated,

said video summary generation unit selects the next event from said meta data memory, and repeatedly executes generation processing of the video summary until the selected event coincides with a recording position of the latest frame in

said video data memory.

13. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein,

said summary method indication unit indicates a play time of the video summary to catch up to the latest video data stored in said video data memory.

14. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein,

said summary method indication unit indicates information to specify contents of a program in the video data.

15. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein,

said timing decision unit calculates a change quantity of characteristic of the video data in time series, and determines a timing to generate a video summary from the video data when the change quantity is above a predetermined value.

16. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein,

said timing decision unit determines a timing to generate a video summary from the video data when

said summary method indication unit indicates change of the generation method of the video summary.

17. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein,

if said timing decision unit generates the video summary generation request while said video summary play unit is playing the video summary,

said video summary generation unit generates a new video summary from the video data stored after the previous video data from which the video summary was generated.

18. The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein,

said video summary play unit changes playing from the video summary to the new video summary when the playing of one scene of the video summary is completed or when the playing of the video summary passes a predetermined time.

19. A method for playing a video summary, comprising:

receiving a signal including video data;

sequentially storing the video data in a memory;

generating a video summary by referring to the signal;

indicating a generation method of the video summary;

generating the video summary from the video date by using the generation method in response to the video summary generation request; and

playing the video summary.

20. A computer program product, comprising:

a computer readable program code embodied in said product for causing a computer to play a video summary, said computer readable program code comprising:

a first program code to receive a signal including video data;

a second program code to sequentially store the video data in a memory;

a third program code to generate a video summary generation request by referring to the signal;

a fourth program code to indicate a generation method of the video summary;

a fifth program code to generate the video summary from the video data by using the generation method in response to the video summary generation

request; and

a sixth program code to play the video summary.